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claims pto

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1. (Currently amended) ~~A remote managing~~ An information processing  
system for managing plural image forming apparatuses and plural types of maintenance  
agreements relating to the image forming apparatuses, comprising:

a receiver that receives information of a number of printed paper sheets  
output by ~~any one of the an~~ image forming apparatuses apparatus, together with an  
identifier of the image forming apparatus, via a communication path;

a memory that stores a variety of unit prices ~~charge amounts~~ per paper sheet  
to be output by each of the image forming apparatuses, wherein each of the variety of unit  
prices is associated with an identifier of an image forming apparatuses and a type in  
accordance with the types of maintenance agreement for agreements of a content of  
services by a serviceman of the image forming apparatus apparatuses, corresponding to  
each of the image forming apparatuses; and

a calculation section that calculates a payable amount for an image forming  
apparatus having the identifier on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets  
received by said receiver, associated with the identifier and (ii) a unit price ~~charge amount~~  
of the variety of unit prices, ~~charge amounts~~ stored in said memory, associated with the  
identifier and the type of maintenance agreement for the image forming apparatus in  
correspondence with the image forming apparatus from which the number of printed paper  
sheets is received.



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2. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 1, wherein said memory stores a first ~~charge amount~~ unit price per printed sheet in correspondence with an agreement of a first type and a second ~~charge amount~~ unit price per printed sheet in correspondence with an agreement of a second type,

wherein the contents of services under each of the agreements of the first type and the second type differ from each other, and

wherein the amount of the second ~~charge~~ unit price is an additional amount of the first ~~charge~~ unit price and a predetermined amount.

20 3. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the image forming apparatus and said information processing apparatus are capable of two-way communication through a first network.

4. (Currently amended) The system according to claim 1, further comprising an input section that inputs an instruction for instructing an agreement sent from an external computer, input through an agreement instruction window displayed by the external computer,

wherein said calculation section calculates the payable amount based upon (i) a ~~charge amount~~ unit price per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed by the instruction input by said input section and (ii) the number of printed sheets received by said receiver.

5. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 4, further comprising a retrieval section for retrieving agreement information of a suitable agreement

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based upon running information, based on the information of the number of paper sheets, of the image forming apparatuses, and

an information section that informs a user of a result of retrieval by said retrieval section.

6. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 1, further comprising an input section that inputs an instruction sent by an external computer for instructing (i) a type of agreement and (ii) a period of the type of agreement input through an agreement instruction window displayed by the external computer,

wherein said calculation section calculates the payable amount in the instructed period input by said input section based upon (i) a ~~charge amount~~ unit price per printed sheet in accordance with the type of agreement in the instructed period and (ii) the number of printed sheets is a number of sheets printed during the instructed period.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~A remote managing~~ An information processing method of calculating a charge for use of each of a plurality of image forming apparatuses by a user, comprising the steps of:

receiving information of a number of printed paper sheets output by ~~any one of the~~ an image forming apparatus, together with an identifier of the image forming apparatus, via a communication path;

storing a variety of unit prices ~~charge amounts~~ per paper sheet to be output by each of the image forming apparatuses, wherein each of the variety of unit prices is associated with an identifier of an image forming apparatus and a type to a memory in

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~~accordance with the types of maintenance agreement for agreements of a content of~~  
~~services by a serviceman of the image forming apparatus apparatuses, corresponding to~~  
~~each of the image forming apparatuses; and~~

calculating a payable amount for use of an image forming apparatus having  
the identifier on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets, received by said  
receiver, associated with the identifier and (ii) a unit price charge amount of the variety of  
unit prices, charge amounts stored in said memory, associated with the identifier and the  
type of maintenance agreement for the image forming apparatus in correspondence with the  
image forming apparatus from which the number of printed paper sheets is received.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 7, wherein said  
storing step stores a first ~~charge amount~~ unit price per printed sheet in correspondence with  
an agreement of a first type and a second charge amount unit price per printed sheet in  
accordance with an agreement of a second type,

wherein the contents of services under each of the agreements of the first  
type and the second type differ from each other, and

wherein the amount of the second ~~charge~~ unit price is an additional amount  
of the first ~~charge~~ unit price and a predetermined amount.

9. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 7, further  
comprising an inputting step of inputting an instruction for instructing an agreement sent  
from an external computer, input through agreement instruction window displayed by the  
external computer,

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wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount based upon (i) ~~as charge amount~~ a unit price per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed by the instruction input in said inputting step and (ii) the number of printed sheets received in said receiving step.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 9, further comprising:

a retrieving step of retrieving agreement information of a suitable agreement based upon running information, based on the information of the number of paper sheets, of the image forming apparatuses; and

an informing step of informing a user of a result of retrieval by said retrieval step.

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 7, further comprising an inputting step for inputting an instruction sent by an external computer for instructing (i) a type of agreement and (ii) a period of the type of agreement input through an agreement instruction window displayed by the external computer,

wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount in the instructed period input by said input step based upon (i) a ~~charge amount~~ unit price per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement in the instructed period and (ii) the number of printed sheets is a number of sheets printed during the instructed period.

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12. (Currently amended) A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium for a remote managing method for calculating a charge for use of each of a plurality of image forming apparatuses by a user, comprising codes for the steps of:

receiving information of a number of printed paper sheets output by ~~any one of the~~ an image forming apparatus, together with an identifier of the image forming apparatus, via a communication path;

storing a variety of unit prices ~~charge amounts~~ per paper sheet to be output by each of the image forming apparatuses, wherein each of the variety of unit prices is associated with an identifier of an image forming apparatus and a type to a memory in accordance with the types of maintenance agreement for ~~agreements of a content of~~ services by a serviceman of the image forming apparatus ~~apparatuses~~, corresponding to each of the image forming apparatuses; and

calculating as payable amount for use of an image forming apparatus having the identifier on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets, received by said receiver, associated with the identifier and (ii) a unit price ~~charge amount~~ of the variety of unit prices, ~~charge amounts~~ stored in said memory, associated with the identifier and the type of maintenance agreement for the image forming apparatus in correspondence with the image forming apparatus from which the number of printed paper sheets is received,

13. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim 12, wherein said storing step stores a first ~~charge amount~~ unit price per printed sheet in correspondence with an agreement of a first type and a second ~~charge amount~~ unit price per printed sheet in correspondence with an agreement of a second type,

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wherein the contents of services under each of the agreements of the first type and the second type differ from each other, and

wherein the amount of the second ~~charge~~ unit price is an additional amount of the first ~~charge~~ unit price and a predetermined amount

14. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim 12, further comprising ~~a program code~~ for a step of inputting an instruction for instructing an agreement sent from an external computer, input through an agreement instruction window displayed by the external computer,

wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount based upon (i) a ~~charge amount~~ unit price per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed by the instruction input in said inputting step and (ii) the number of printed sheets received in said receiving step.

15. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim 12, further comprising:

~~program code~~ for a step of retrieving agreement information of a ~~most~~ suitable agreement based upon running information of the image forming apparatuses based on the information of the number of paper sheets; and

~~program code~~ for a step of informing a user of a result of retrieval by said retrieval step.

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16. (Currently Amended) The program according to claim 12, further comprising ~~code for~~ an inputting step for inputting an instruction sent by an external computer for instructing (i) a type of agreement and (ii) a period of the type of agreement input through an agreement instruction window displayed by the external computer,

wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount in the instructed period input in said input step based upon (i) a ~~charge amount~~ unit price per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement in the instructed period and (ii) the number of printed sheets is the number of sheets printed during the instructed period.



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5 17. A computer-readable storage medium which stores a computer program to be executed by a computer, said program comprising:

a program code for determining contents of a maintenance agreement of each image forming apparatus,  
10 which is stored in a memory; and

a program code for calculating a payable amount on the basis of a unit price corresponding to the contents of the maintenance agreement and a charge amount stored in the memory.

15 18. The medium according to claim 17, wherein the memory stores a first charge amount per printed and output paper sheet including maintenance by a serviceman and a second charge amount without the maintenance, the first charge amount being added with a maintenance cost, unlike the  
20 second charge amount.

19. The medium according to claim 17, wherein the computer program further comprises a program code for generating and transmitting window information for changing maintenance agreement information stored in the  
25 memory.

20. The medium according to claim 17, wherein the program

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code for transmission comprises receiving use situation information of the image forming apparatus and notifying the user of agreement information corresponding to the received use situation information.

- 5 21. The medium according to claim 17, wherein  
the computer program further comprises a program code for counting the total number of printed paper sheets of the image forming apparatus in a predetermined period, and  
the program code for calculation comprises

- 10 calculating the payable amount in accordance with the total number of printed paper sheets counted by the program code for counting and the maintenance agreement information corresponding to the image forming apparatus.

22. The method according to claim 7 further comprising  
15 a step of two-way communication through the image forming apparatus and the first network.

23. The program according to claim 12, further comprising a program code for two-way communication through the image forming apparatus and the first network.

- 20 24. The medium according to claim 17, further comprising a program code for two-way communication through the image forming apparatus and the first network.

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25. (Withdrawn) An information processing apparatus for executing processing related to an expendable used in an image forming apparatus, comprising:  
a window information generation section for generating window information for designating a time of delivery of a new expendable and collection of a remaining component of a used expendable; and  
a transmission section for transmitting the window information generated by said window information generation section to the image forming apparatus.

26. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said apparatus further comprises a use amount acquisition section for acquiring use amount information representing a use amount of the expendable, which is issued from a device using the expendable, and said transmission section transmits the window information on the basis of the use amount information acquired by said use amount acquisition section.

27. (Withdrawn) An information processing method by an information processing apparatus for executing processing related to an expendable used in an image forming apparatus, comprising:

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the window information generation step of generating window information for designating a time of delivery of a new expendable and collection of a remaining component of a used expendable; and

the transmission step of transmitting the window information generated in the window information generation step to the image forming apparatus.

28. (Withdrawn) A program code to be executed by a computer, comprising:

a program code for generating window information for designating a time of delivery of a new expendable to be used by an image forming apparatus and collection of a remaining component of a used expendable; and

a program code for transmitting the window information generated by a window information generation section to the image forming apparatus.

29. (Withdrawn) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a

computer program to be executed by a computer, said program code comprising:

a program code for generating window information for designating a time of delivery of a new expendable to be used by an image forming apparatus and collection of a remaining component of a used expendable; and

a program code for transmitting the window information generated by window information generation section to the image forming apparatus.

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30. (Withdrawn) An information processing apparatus comprising:

reception means for receiving malfunction information of an image forming apparatus; and

transmission means for transmitting the received malfunction information to a computer provided in a service division for coping with a malfunction of the image forming apparatus.

31. (Withdrawn) The apparatus according to claim 30, further comprising

window information generation means for generating window information for inputting and transmitting the malfunction information of the image forming apparatus.

32. (Withdrawn) An information processing method comprising:

the reception step of receiving malfunction information of an image forming apparatus; and

the transmission step of transmitting the received malfunction information to a computer provided in a service division for coping with a malfunction of the image forming apparatus.

33. (Withdrawn) A program code to be executed by a computer, comprising:

a program code for receiving malfunction information of an image forming apparatus; and

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a program code for transmitting the received malfunction information to a computer provided in a service division for coping with a malfunction of the image forming apparatus.

34. (Withdrawn) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a computer program to be executed by a computer, said program code comprising:

a program code for receiving malfunction information of an image forming apparatus; and

a program code for transmitting the received malfunction information to a computer provided in a service division for coping with a malfunction of the image forming apparatus.

35. (New) The system according to Claim 1, further comprising a provision section for providing an external apparatus with a section for providing information of an agreement instruction window which is readable by a web browser,

wherein said calculation section calculates the payable amount based upon (i) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed through a display window of the external apparatus based upon the information of agreement instruction window and (ii) the number of printed sheets acquired by said acquisition section.

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36. (New) The system according to Claim 1, further comprising a transmitter for transmitting a window for confirming an identifier and an agreement corresponding to the identifier to the external apparatus.

37. (New) The method according to Claim 7, further comprising a providing step of providing an external apparatus with a section for providing information of an agreement instruction window which is readable by a web browser,

wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount based upon (i) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed through a display window of the external apparatus based upon the information of agreement instruction window and (ii) the number of printed sheets acquired in said acquiring step.

38. (New) The method according to Claim 7, further comprising a transmitting step of transmitting a window for confirming an identifier and an agreement corresponding to the identifier to the external apparatus.

39. (New) The computer program according to Claim 12, further comprising program code for providing an external apparatus with a section for providing information of an agreement instruction window which is readable by a web browser,

wherein said calculating step calculates the payable amount based upon (i) a charge amount per printed sheet in accordance with the agreement instructed through a display window of the external apparatus based upon the information of an agreement instruction window and (ii) the number of printed sheets acquired in said acquiring step.

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40. (New) The computer program according to Claim 12, further comprising a program code for transmitting a window for confirming an identifier and an agreement corresponding to the identifier to the external apparatus.

41. (New) An information processing system for managing plural types of maintenance agreements relating to an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a managing section for managing agreement information of an agreement of maintenance of the image forming apparatus by a serviceman, wherein the agreement is an agreement of a first type corresponding to a first maintenance content or an agreement of a second type corresponding to a second maintenance content;

an acquisition section for acquiring information of a number of printed sheets by the image forming apparatus via a communication path;

a memory for storing a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet in accordance with whether the type of agreement for the image forming apparatus is the first type or the second type, in correspondence with the image forming apparatus; and

a calculation section for calculating a payable amount on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets acquired by said acquisition section and (ii) a charge amount stored in said memory in correspondence with the image forming apparatus.

42. (New) An information processing method for managing plural types of maintenance agreements relating to an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a managing step of managing agreement information of an agreement of maintenance of the image forming apparatus by a serviceman, wherein the agreement is an



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agreement of the first type corresponding to the first maintenance content or an agreement of the second type corresponding to the second maintenance content;

an acquiring step of acquiring information of a number of printed sheet by the image forming apparatus via a communication path;

a storing step of storing a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet to a memory in accordance with whether the type of agreement for the image forming apparatus is the first type or the second type, in correspondence with the image forming apparatus; and

a calculating step of calculating a payable amount on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets acquired by said acquisition section and (ii) a charge amount stored in said memory in correspondence with the image forming apparatus.

43. (New) A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium for calculating a charge for use of an image forming apparatus by a user, comprising codes for the steps of:

managing agreement information of an agreement of maintenance of an image forming apparatus by a serviceman, wherein the agreement is an agreement of the first type corresponding to the first maintenance content or an agreement of the second type corresponding to the second maintenance content;

acquiring information of a number of printed sheets by the image forming apparatus via a communication path;

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storing a variety of charge amounts per paper sheet to a memory in accordance with whether the type of agreement for the image forming apparatus is the first type or the second type, in correspondence with the image forming apparatus; and calculating a payable amount on the basis of (i) the number of printed paper sheets acquired by said acquisition section and (ii) a charge amount stored in said memory in correspondence with the image forming apparatus.